



WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE on EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE for HISPANICS

25 YEARS OF FULFILLING AMERICA'S FUTURE

The strength of America's education system is undoubtedly connected to the academic success of Hispanics. With the shift in demographics taking place in our nation's schools, securing an adequate and equal education for Hispanic students should be a priority not just for the federal government but also of every person in this country.

September 2015 marks the 25th anniversary of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics (Initiative) and to commemorate this, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and the Initiative launched the "25th Anniversary Year of Action: Fulfilling America's Future" from October 2014 through September 2015.

The Anniversary Year of Action is comprised of three types of elements:

- 1) Outreach activities across the country that gather Latino community leaders, share information about federal resources and investments, and highlight educational progress,
- 2) Commitments to action by the private, nonprofit, and state and local sectors that will invest in increasing educational outcomes and opportunities for Hispanic students, and
- 3) A national blueprint that will highlight the Hispanic community's major educational accomplishments and trends, identify persistent gaps and challenges, outline federal government efforts supporting education, and provide policy recommendations to address current educational needs.

These efforts will be supported by the Initiative's two companion bodies – the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics and the Initiative's recently launched Federal Interagency Working Group on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, as well as a robust outreach and communications strategy.

- **Outreach Activities:** The Initiative will engage Hispanic communities throughout the nation, both with established Latino populations and emerging communities that have experienced substantial Hispanic growth in recent years. In addition to highlighting efforts that have yielded results and made progress in longstanding communities, the Initiative will share information about federal resources, highlight promising practices, and connect leaders in emerging communities to strengthen their work serving Hispanic students and families. Activities will include high-profile town hall events, site visits, participation in community activities, and announcements of Hispanic education commitments.
- **Commitments to Action:** The Initiative will cultivate new commitments to action aimed at supporting and expanding Hispanic education from stakeholder organizations in the private, nonprofit, and state and local sectors. The commitments will increase educational opportunities for Latino students in critical areas including:
 - Early Learning
 - K-12 Education & College Access
 - Postsecondary Completion
 - Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education
 - Latino Teacher Recruitment

Recognizing that the success of our country is a shared responsibility, the Initiative is committed to engaging leaders from all sectors to invest in meaningful, lasting approaches to increasing access and success for Latino students from cradle to career.

- ***National Hispanic Education Blueprint:*** The national blueprint will assess the state of education in the Latino community, emphasize the Obama Administration’s asset-based narrative leveraging data about federal investments in education, and bring attention to key policy recommendations that will further expand educational opportunities and outcomes for the Hispanic community. Specifically, the national blueprint will identify the Hispanic community’s educational gains, gaps, and trends over the past quarter century, and present key policy recommendations for leaders and stakeholders across various sectors (federal, state, local, institutional, business, etc.) who focus on the nation’s future education agenda.

As we approach the Initiative’s 25th anniversary, and leverage this historic milestone to highlight the tremendous progress in Hispanic education, the Initiative will also challenge the nation to come together and address persistent challenges and needs by providing policy recommendations that will increase opportunities and improve outcomes for everyone over the next 25 years, including the largest, youngest, and fastest growing minority population in the country. Through persistence and collaboration, we will tap into the potential of the Hispanic community to build on success, overcome the challenges that persist, and fulfill America’s future.

History

The Initiative was first established by President George H.W. Bush with Executive Order (E.O.) 12729¹ on September 24, 1990. The E.O. was the result of advocacy efforts by the National Council of La Raza and other Hispanic organizations to address the educational challenges and alarming statistics faced by the Hispanic community. During the 1990s, the Hispanic high school dropout rate was 32 percent compared to the national rate of 12 percent². Hispanics were the lowest enrolled ethnic group in higher education and earned less in weekly wages than their peers³. Through the E.O., the Initiative and its President’s Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics (Commission) provided guidance to the President and the U.S. Secretary of Education as federal education policies and programs impacting Hispanics were developed.

Since then every Administration has renewed the Initiative, signifying the importance of investing in the Hispanic community’s educational attainment and success. To continue addressing the educational needs of the Latino community and build on the progress made, President Obama expanded the E.O. to ensure a quality education for all Hispanics through a cradle-to-career agenda.

Progress and Opportunity

Over the past quarter century, Latinos have made historic progress and continue to prioritize education as the largest investment and vehicle towards reaching the middle class. The Obama administration has made historic investments in education that have benefited the Hispanic community. According to the Census Bureau, the Hispanic high school dropout rate has been cut in half from 28 percent in 2000 to 14 percent in 2011, bringing the Hispanic graduation rate to an all-time high. While these are significant accomplishments, the Latino community continues to face serious challenges in education. Latino children still are more likely to attend low-performing schools, and are less likely to participate in quality early learning programs, enroll in rigorous coursework – including STEM courses, learn from a high-performing teacher, or have access to a postsecondary education. Currently, only 14 percent of Latino adults in the United States have a Bachelor’s degree or higher. As the largest, youngest, and fastest-growing population, Hispanics represent an increasingly significant portion of our nation. Ensuring their success is not only the right thing to do for the Latino community, but the smart thing to do for our country’s future.

¹ Executive Order 12729 “Executive Order 12729 - Presidents Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans”, September 20, 1990

² U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2014). *The Condition of Education 2014* (NCES 2014-083), [Status Dropout Rates](#).

³ U.S Department of Labor. The Latino Labor Force in the Recovery. <http://www.dol.gov/Sec/media/reports/hispaniclaborforce/>. April 5, 2012.